

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SINGAP 03365 081143Z

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-08 OMB-01 TRSE-00 AID-05 IO-13

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /083 W

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R 081055Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8257

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SINGAPORE 3365

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ECIN, PFOR, ASEAN

SUBJECT: MEDIA COMMENT ON ASEAN SUMMIT

REF: KUALA LUMPUR 5151

1. SINGAPORE'S PRESS REACTION TO THE ASEAN SUMMIT WAS SUMMED UP BY A FRONT-PAGE STORY AUGUST 6 IN THE AFTERNOON NEW NATION, WHICH BEGAN, "THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF ASEAN'S SECOND SUMMIT ARE MAINLY INTANGIBLE-- AND DISAPPOINTING TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE THAT THE FIVE-NATION GROUPING COULD AND SHOULD ACCELERATE THE PACE OF ECONOMIC COOPERATION... FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE, THE ASEAN CONSENSUS THIS TIME IS TO STRIKE OUT FOR FURTHER CONSOLIDATION OF POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RELATIONS AND TO LIVE WITH THE SLOW PACE OF ECONOMIC COOPERATION--AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING."

2. THE MORNING STRAITS TIMES ON 8/5 DEVOTED THE MAJORITY OF ITS EDITORIAL PAGE TO THE TEXT OF PM LEE'S OPENING STATEMENT AND A COMPANION EDITORIAL STRESSING SINGAPORE'S VIEW THAT THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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REAL TEST OF ASEAN'S VIABILITY WAS IN THE THEN-HOPED-FOR AGREEMENTS ON ECONOMIC COOPERATION; E.I., THE INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS AND THE 71 (OR 1700) PRODUCTS. ALTHOUGH SINGAPORE WAS OBVIOUSLY DISAPPOINTED BY THE LACK OF PROGRESS ON THESE FRONTS THAT DISAPPOINTMENT HAS NOT YET BEEN DISCUSSED IN THE PRESS HERE. PRESS ATTENTION HAS TURNED ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY TO THE MEETINGS WITH THE JAPANESE, AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND LEADERS.

3. FOR THE MOST PART, THE MEDIA HAVE CONCENTRATED ON FACTUAL ACCOUNTS OF THE SUMMIT, WITH LENGTHY EXCERPTS FROM THE SPEECHES AND STATEMENTS OF THE SINGAPOREAN DELEGATES AND CONDENSED SUMMARIES OF THE REMARKS OF THE OTHER COUNTRIES' LEADERS. MALAYSIAN TELEVISION RELAY FACILITIES ACROSS THE CAUSEWAY PROVIDED SINGAPOREANS WITH LIVE COVERAGE OF MANY OF THE OPEN SESSIONS AND DINNERS, AND SINGAPORE TELEVISION SHOWED SEVERAL DELAYED BROADCASTS OF THE SAME EVENTS.

4. EMBASSY COMMENT: EVEN THOUGH THE KL SUMMIT RESULTS WILL BE CONSIDERED DISAPPOINTING (ALTHOUGH NOT UNEXPECTED) BY THE GOS, THIS SENTIMENT HAS NOT BEEN FORCEFULLY EXPRESSED IN THE GOVERNMENT-/INFLUENCED MEDIA HERE. SINGAPORE'S IMPATIENCE WITH THE SLOW PACE OF ASEAN ECONOMIC INTEGRATION HAS BEEN EXPRESSED IN THE MEDIA HERE, BUT ALWAYS IN A MUTED FASHION. WE WOULD EXPECT MORE COMMENT ALONG THESE LINES WHEN THE DELEGATION RETURNS FROM KUALA LUMPUR, PERHAPS LESS MUTED GIVEN GOS SENTIMENTS EXPRESSED REFTEL. EMBASSY PLANS TO SOUND OUT GOS REACTION TO ASEAN SUMMIT SOON AS APPROPRIATE OFFICIALS BECOME AVAILABLE ON RETURN FROM KUALA LUMPUR.
HOLDRIDGE

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